



How to Manage Stress

Supporting a Parent's Mental Health and Well-being



Parenthood is Hard Work

- ▶ Parenting can be incredibly rewarding, yet can also bring a range of challenges, demands, and stress. It requires patience and love.
- ▶ Managing stress as a parent is essential for both your well-being and your child's emotional health.
- ▶ Examples of parental stressors include financial strain, time demands, children's' health and safety, parental isolation and cultural pressures.
- ▶ Stress reducing strategies can provide an opportunity to recalibrate your thinking and provide a way to feel the joys of parenting.
- ▶ Lets talk about some ways to develop and support parental well being.

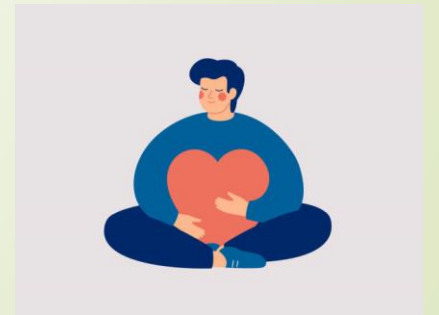
Keep a Positive Attitude

- ▶ Practice Gratitude. It can strengthen the immune system, lower blood pressure and produce a sense of relaxation.
- ▶ Practice Acceptance. "This Too Shall Pass" Mantra
- ▶ Seek out spiritual and faith based support.



Accept that There are Events that You Cannot Control

- Address our mindset – shift your thoughts and reframe the event
- Identify what you can control
- Practice Mindfulness – Focusing on the present moment and concentrating on your surroundings may distract you from things you can't control in the moment.
- Use Deep Breathing – Consider using deep breathing exercises when your feeling overwhelmed by people/places/things you cannot control.
- Journal your thoughts – journaling can be an effective way to express and process your emotions.





Be Assertive Rather Than Aggressive

- ▶ Express yourself directly and clearly
- ▶ Use “I” statements rather than pointing at others to communicate.
- ▶ Share your feelings
- ▶ Remain firm and consistent.



sure decisive firm insistent positive
confident certain
assertive

Learn to Manage Your Time Effectively

- ▶ Set priorities, goals and deadlines.
- ▶ Get organized. Use structured schedules.
- ▶ Schedule tasks appropriately and delegate.
- ▶ Don't procrastinate.
- ▶ Avoid multi-tasking.



Set Limits and Say “No”

- ▶ Think of saying “No” as your personal stop sign.
- ▶ Start small. Be clear. Saying “No” is a complete sentence.
- ▶ Respect your own needs as well as needs of others. Create boundaries.

it's OK to say

NO!!!



Make Time For Hobbies and Interests

- ▶ They are great for mental health and provide a sense of identity and joy.
- ▶ They can sometimes provide physical benefits.
- ▶ They help you learn and grow.
- ▶ Cuddle with a pet. Listen to music. Get your laugh on.



Avoiding Relying on Drugs and Alcohol to Reduce Stress

- Resist temptation. Avoid over usage to maintain a sense of calm.
- Find alternatives (mocktails, sparkling water, herbal teas and supplements).
- Surround yourself with friends and family who don't overindulge.



Seek Out Social Support

- ▶ Building supportive relationships with friends, family , and the community can provide a valuable network of support during stressful times.
- ▶ Book clubs, sports teams, fellowship meetings. All provide opportunities to share with others and gain meaningful relations.



Establish a Healthy Diet

- Build a healthy food prep habit helps to improve one's overall diet.
- Keep fresh, nutritious food on hand for easy access to promote balanced healthy meals.
- Read labels and purchase healthy snack alternatives.
- Be disciplined.



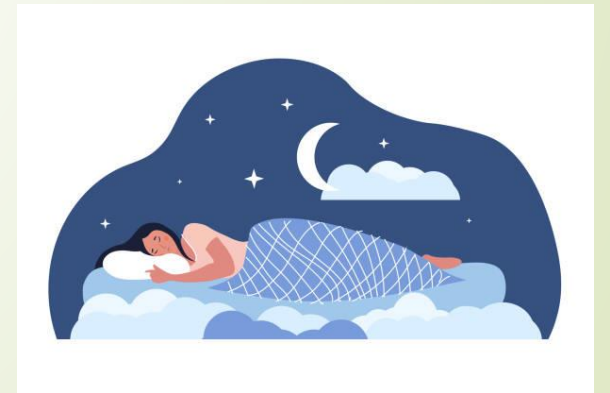
Exercise Regularly

- ▶ Exercise improves health and provides a sense of well-being.
- ▶ Any form of exercise can act as a stress reliever.
- ▶ Pick an activity that you enjoy. Include a friend or co-worker.
- ▶ Start in short bursts and increase accordingly.



Focus on Sleep

- Getting quality sleep is important for positive mental health.
- Establish a pre-bed time routine.
- Take an afternoon nap and micro breaks throughout the day.



Parenting is a Journey not a Destination

- Stress can be a constant in your life and knowing how to reduce stress and anxiety can be helpful and beneficial.
- If you're finding it hard to cope, feel overwhelmed, or notice that stress reducing technique's are not working, it may be time to talk to your health care provider. A mental health specialist may recommend talk therapy or other coping tools, in addition to the ones we've been talking about, to help you manage your stress levels.
- Chronic stress not only affects your mental health, but it can also contribute to a host of other health issues.
- Your children matter but so do you.

